DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

CMAOC Training:

CAO: Primer for Suicide Cases

Preparation

- CAC Briefing
  - Circumstances surrounding the death
    - Review available information /facts
    - Disregard personal feelings on suicide
  - Use the term “Apparent Self-Inflicted”
  - NEVER use the term SUICIDE
  - CAO Packet
    - Documents
    - Forms
    - CAO Report
- Always keep the CAO Report up to date

Notification Team debrief

- Family Reactions:
  - Shock
  - Disbelief / Denial
  - Anger
  - Extreme Grief
  - Hostility
- Family Dynamics
  - Spouse, Children, Parents, Siblings
  - Known interactions between each
- Dignified Transfer Decisions if a theater death case

Initial Phone Call

- Write down what to say
  - Know what needs to be accomplished
  - Rehearse the phone call several times
- Demonstrate compassion and confidence in your voice
  - Identify yourself and extend condolences
  - Listen carefully to what is said
  - Make a note of any questions or concerns the Family has
- Establish time for the first visit

Initial Visit and Dignified Transfer

- Review Dignified Transfer Module if a theater death case
- CAC will instruct you on:
  - Travel arrangements
  - Transportation at Dover
  - Hotel accommodations
    - Debit card for Family expenses
  - Point of contact at Dover
  - Time of expected transfer

Investigations and Reports

- Keep the Family informed of all investigations and reports
  - Know the various investigations that are ongoing
  - Know the status of investigations (CMAOC will assist)
- CID Casualty Liaison Officer (CLO) for those deaths that CID investigates, to include on-post and theater suicides
  - CLO will contact CAO to open lines of communications
  - CLO will contact the PNOK within 5 days of notification
  - CLO and CAO will coordinate closely to keep the PNOK informed, answer any questions, prepare responses and determine who is to be briefed
  - CLO will update PNOK and CAO at least once every 30 days with updates

Visits with the Family

- Listen carefully
  - Let the Family set the pace
  - Trust your instincts
  - Certain activity could bring extreme negative reactions
  - Patience is most important
- Report any significant behavior or emotional circumstances of the Family to the CAC
- Counseling for the Family
  - Department of Veterans Affairs
  - MilitaryOneSource
  - Local Organizations

Overall CAO Responsibilities

- Follow what you learned in additional training
- Ensure that Planeside Honors (if the remains are flown to the funeral location) and Military Funeral Honors are locked in
- If the death occurred in theater, the CSA will appoint a general officer to represent him at the funeral
  - Help the general prepare by providing "sitrep" on Family dynamics
- Coordinate with Benefits Coordinator and assist with all benefit-related applications and requests for investigations
- Introduce the Family to their Support Coordinator
- Army continues to provide support for the Family

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Additional Resources

- Online Grief and Bereavement Module
- Online Dignified Transfer Module
- Online Planeside Honors Module
- CAO Self-Care

Remember:

You are there to Honor the Soldier's Service regardless of the manner of death